(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). A factual report on the allegations made in the newsitem has been called for from the University and any further action in the matter would be possible after the same is received.

Kashmir Issue

2431. SHRI CHITTA BASU : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether former Pakistan Prime Minister Ms. Benazir Bhutto described the recent elections in Jammu & Kashmir as a 'sham' during her visit to London in September, 1996;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether she also urged upon the UK Government to intervene as a third party in the resolution of the dispute between India and Pakistan on Kashmir; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) to (d). Government have seen reports that the former Pakistan Prime Minister during her visit to London in September, 1996, while delivering an address at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, expressed her views. In doing this, she was seeking to internationalise the Kashmir issue.

These remarks are part of Pakistan's standard and continuing propaganda and its unsuccessful efforts to question the credibility of the electoral process in J & K, which has been widely welcomed by the international community. Government stand committed to the resolution of all India-Pakistan issues through bilateral discussions as envisaged in the Simla Agreement, and there can be no role of any sort for any third party.

[Translation]

Pak's Intrusion into Indian Waters

2432. SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Pakistan is intruding into Indian waters in Arabian Sea; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b). Government have seen reports regarding Pakistan's notification specifying 'baselines' to measure Pakistan's territorial waters, the contiguous zone, the EEZ and continental shelf in the Arabian Sea. Government have conveyed to Pakistan that while they reserve the right to seek suitable revision of the 'baselines' as notified by Pakistan insofar as they impinge upon India's sovereign jurisdiction, Government unequivocally rejects as unacceptable the coordinate point (K) 23 33.90N... 68 07.80E referred to in the notification as it encroaches upon the territorial waters of India which are within its sovereign jurisdiction.

[English]

Tea Warehouse, Calcutta

2433. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether all exports from the eastern region of the country, particularly that of tea growing area, are being handled by the Kandla Port;

(b) whether the tea warehouse at the Calcutta port is being underutilized;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d). Yes, Sir. Previously the Tea received from the Hinterland was auctioned in their godowns. The auctioning has since stopped in Calcutta and the auction centre has been shifted to Guwahati. Now, the Tea is exported in containers which are stuffed in the Container Freight Stations/Inland Container Depots. The existing Tea godowns are being utilised by the Port Trust for other Port related activities.

Terminal at Cochin

2434. SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Sri Frederic Herris who was appointed as consultant to study the possibility of setting up a container terminal has favoured, Kochin than Tuticorin on the basis of merits, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the Cochin Port has 140 hectares of land at Vallarpadam for this purpose;

(c) whether the cost of establishing such terminal at Cochin will be lesser than that at Tuticorin, if so, the details thereof and the estimated cost of each (Cochin and Tuticorin);

(d) whether the Government of Kerala has requested for release of more funds for this project; and

(e) if so, the stage of the sanctioned project and the funds released so far?